

I'm against lifting the Cross-Ownership ban.

Yes, companies can save money by consolidating news gathering operations, and I can understand why they don't see any disadvantage to it. The key disagreement I have with these companies is not due, in my opinion, to any conspiracy or malice on their part. They simply pay attention to different measures of the quality of news.

This is completely understandable. For anyone involved in the day-to-day production of news, news quality means doing their specific jobs well, so if lifting the Cross-Ownership ban would allow them to do their jobs better, they naturally think that would increase the quality of news.

For news consumers, one of the most important factors in the quality of news is the number of different voices and viewpoints available. It doesn't matter whether the owning corporation exercises editorial control. Keep in mind that the entire benefit they want is to consolidate news gathering operations, which means that the two news sources will have one voice. Whether it's the voice of the parent corporation or the voice of the news gathering staff makes no difference.

This kind of situation is exactly why we need the FCC. Obviously, and very understandably, the media companies want to consolidate, and they believe they are doing it to improve news quality. But diversity of voices is an essential measure of product quality that is fundamentally incapable of asserting itself through market forces.

I am at my most patriotic when I hear wildly different views on the same news event. Please don't let them take that away.

Sincerely,  
Ray Pingree